

ABSTRACT

A sample of mobile home residents in the East North Central States showed that mobile homes provided housing for a segment of the population which was not typical of the region. The mobile home household heads were younger--34 years or younger--more than twice as often. Families living in mobile homes were smaller than other families in the sample area. Mobile home residents generally had less college education. Mobile home households did have lower levels of income. Compared with a national sample of recent mobile home purchasers, such households in this area were found to have fewer young couples without children and more residents of retirement age.

Key Words: Housing, rural housing, rural nonfarm people.

Cover photos from the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association.

HIGHLIGHTS

Mobile homes have become a major source of new housing for low and moderately low income households in the most rural areas--the open country. When compared with the characteristics of all households in the open-country area of the East North Central States, the following household characteristics reflect the type of need that mobile homes were meeting in rural areas in 1967:

- (1) Households were more likely to own or be paying for their home.
- (2) Family size was smaller.
- (3) Household heads were younger.
- (4) Household heads were more likely to have gone beyond the eighth grade, equally likely to have graduated from high school, and less likely to have completed a year or more of college.
- (5) Household incomes were lower.
- (6) Household head was more often a male.

In comparison to the residents of new mobile homes in the entire United States, as enumerated by the 1967 Census Mobile Home Study, mobile home households in the open-country region consisted more often of only one person, who was very likely to be one of the relatively large group of household heads aged 65 or older. Two-person households, which were often young marrieds, occurred less frequently in the sample area.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN COUNTRY MOBILE HOME
RESIDENTS--EAST NORTH CENTRAL STATES, 1967

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During 1967-69, new mobile home shipments increased 72 percent, continuing the trend which showed a 131-percent increase from 1960 to 1967. 1/ Because of this rapid growth, the mobile home industry is gaining increased attention from those concerned with providing adequate housing for all residents of the United States. Rural areas are particularly in need; in 1968, 17 percent of the homes in nonmetropolitan areas were substandard, compared with only 5 percent within metropolitan areas. 2/ According to the President's Second Annual Report on National Housing Goals, the housing industry is not meeting housing needs. New conventional housing construction and renovations do not even adequately accommodate the formation of new households and replace the housing units being removed from the housing supply.

A report by Congress states that "They (i.e., mobile homes) are clearly making a contribution to the general housing supply. Moreover, mobile homes at present constitute the single largest source of acceptable new housing available at prices which moderate income families can afford." 3/ In 1970, this realization of the importance of mobile homes led to the inclusion of new mobile homes in the stock of housing counted toward the national housing goals. These goals were established in the President's First Annual Report on National Housing Goals, issued in 1969. 4/

Few data are available on the characteristics of mobile home residents in rural areas. The most comprehensive study was the 1967 Mobile Home Survey,

1/ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Housing and Urban Development Trends. Washington, D.C. 1970. p. 9.

2/ Housing Characteristics. U.S. Bureau of Census. Series H-121, No. 17. February 1970.

3/ Second Annual Report on National Housing Goals. 91st Congress, 2d Session. House Document No. 91-292. 1970. pp. 1-2.

4/ First Annual Report on National Housing Goals. 91st Congress, 1st Session. House Document No. 91-93. 1969.

done by the Bureau of the Census for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. 5/ But they did not differentiate rural areas. The sample was drawn from mobile homes sold between October 1, 1964, and September 30, 1966, within 40 different States. Although the study included 2,900 households, it was not typical of all mobile home residents, as it included only purchasers of new units. Another study used a sample drawn from mobile homes which were located inside of mobile home parks. 6/ In addition, the sample ran the risk of being selected from unrepresentative areas.

This study is based on a survey of 131 mobile homes in the open-country area of the East North Central Region of the United States. This region is composed of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The mobile home sample comprises a small proportion of the Rural Life Survey, which randomly sampled 4,676 open-country households. Households with over \$10,000 of gross farm income were omitted from the survey. The sample was random by geographic segments. All information was collected by personal interviews with the household head or another household member. This study included mobile homes of all ages, located outside and inside mobile home parks. However, very few mobile home park households were included, because of the nature of sampling. While not national in geographic scope, this study has the virtue of including mobile homes of all ages and is based on a statistically valid sample.

This study is formulated to identify specific characteristics of mobile home households in the sample area: household size and income; tenure of home; and the household head's age, education, and sex.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS

Mobile homes composed between 2 and 3 percent of all homes in the sample area. 7/ Nearly all of them were owned outright or were being purchased (table 1). About half of these homes had been purchased so recently that payments were still being made on them. Few were rented.

Within the study area, single-person households were twice as prevalent for mobile home residents as for the general population (table 2).

Both this study and the Census study show that mobile home households tend to be smaller than other households. However, there appear to be more single-person mobile home households and fewer two-person mobile home households in

5/ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Housing Survey, Parts 1 and 2, Occupied New Housing Units, Mobile Homes, and the Housing Supply. Washington, D.C. Nov. 1968. pp. 65-152.

6/ Focus on the Mobile Home Market. Owens/Corning Fiberglas. Toledo, Ohio, ca. 1970.

7/ Readers are reminded that the sample for this study included only 131 mobile homes. We believe that this sample size is adequate to support the conclusions reached in this study. However, small differences between the characteristics shown in this study and those shown by other studies must be interpreted with care; they could be due to random sampling variations.

Table 1.--Distribution of mobile home households and all households, by tenure, in the open country of the East North Central States, 1967

| Tenure | East North Central open country | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | Mobile homes | | All homes | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Owned, fully paid | 62 | 47.3 | 2,095 | 44.8 |
| Owned, partially paid | 63 | 48.1 | 1,698 | 36.3 |
| Rented and other | 6 | 4.6 | 883 | 18.9 |
| Total | 131 | 100.0 | 4,676 | 100.0 |

Source: Economic Research Service. Rural Life Survey. 1967.

Table 2.--Distribution of households in mobile homes and all homes by number of persons per household in the open country of the East North Central States and the United States, 1967

| Number of persons per household | East North Central: open country 1/ | | United States | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Mobile homes | All homes | Census mobile home study 2/ | All households 3/ |
| | Percent | | | |
| One | 19.8 | 9.5 | 10.7 | 15.5 |
| Two | 25.2 | 31.3 | 39.7 | 28.3 |
| Three | 22.9 | 15.8 | 23.9 | 17.6 |
| Four and more | 32.1 | 43.3 | 25.7 | 38.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

1/ Economic Research Service. Rural Life Survey. 1967. 2/ U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. Housing Survey, Parts 1 and 2, Occupied New Housing Units, Mobile Homes and the Housing Supply. Washington, D.C. Nov. 1968.

3/ Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics Household and Family Characteristics. Mar, 1967; Series P-20, No. 173. U.S. Dept. of Commerce. June 25, 1968.

this open-country region. These dissimilarities may be caused by the sampling of different areas in the two studies. They may also reflect the difference between sampling only recent mobile home purchasers in the Census study and all mobile home residents in this study.

The smaller proportion of single-person households in the Census study may reflect the manufacture of very few small mobile homes at the time of the study. This lack of small new mobile homes results from the continuing trend toward larger mobile homes. Also, single member households were older and probably had resided longer in their smaller mobile home.

This study may have found more households of four or more persons because the households were smaller when the homes were purchased. Families are not likely to purchase such small quarters for an existing family of that size. The larger proportion of two-person households in the HUD study may reflect purchases by newly formed households.

The mobile home household heads are much younger than the general population (table 3). This study and the HUD study both show three to five times the population proportion of mobile home household heads under 25 years of age. While nearly half of the mobile home heads were under 35 years of age, less than one-fifth of the sample area households had heads that young. Mobile home residents in the sample area tended to be the young and the old, with a relatively small number of residents aged 35 to 64. While nearly 60 percent of the household heads in the sample area were aged 35 to 64, only

Table 3.--Distribution of households in mobile homes and all homes by age of household head in the open country of the East North Central States and United States, 1967

| Age of household head | East North Central | | United States | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| | open country 1/ | | | |
| | Mobile homes | All homes | Census mobile home study 2/ | All households 3/ |
| | Percent | | | |
| Under 25 | 16.8 | 3.5 | 22.9 | 6.1 |
| 25 to 34 | 32.1 | 15.5 | 26.5 | 17.5 |
| 35 to 44 | 9.9 | 21.1 | 15.3 | 20.3 |
| 45 to 54 | 13.0 | 19.9 | 14.1 | 20.1 |
| 55 to 64 | 6.9 | 17.5 | 11.8 | 16.7 |
| 65 and over | 21.4 | 22.5 | 9.3 | 19.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

1/, 2/, 3/ See footnotes 1/, 2/, and 3/, table 2.

about 30 percent of the mobile home residents were of that age. The proportion of mobile home household heads who were 65 or older was about the same as for the general sample area population. On the other hand, the census study shows mobile homes with less than one-half the national proportion of household heads aged 65 or older. One would expect that mobile home residents of retirement age would be more prevalent among mobile home residents of retirement areas, such as Florida and Arizona, than among mobile home residents in the open-country area of the study. Thus, this study leads one to expect, that over the Nation, mobile homes are occupied by individuals of retirement age at least as frequently as conventional homes. These older mobile home residents, however, occupy a much smaller proportion of the new mobile homes.

The majority of mobile home households with heads of age 65 or older were composed of only a single person (table 4). In comparison, under 30 percent of all households in the sample area, with a head of age 65 or older, consisted of only one person.

On the opposite end of the family size spectrum, more than half of the mobile home households with four or more members had a head under 45 years of age. This contrasted with the entire sample area where nearly 35 percent of households with a head from ages 45 to 64 had four or more members.

Table 4.-- Distribution of households in mobile homes and all homes by age of household head and number of persons per household in the open country of the East North Central States, 1967

| Number of persons in household | 44 years or less | | 45 to 64 years | | 65 years and over | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| | Mobile homes | All homes | Mobile homes | All homes | Mobile homes | All homes |
| | <u>Percent</u> | | | | | |
| One | 7.8 | 0.6 | 15.4 | 6.9 | 57.1 | 28.7 |
| Two | 13.0 | 8.3 | 50.0 | 38.3 | 35.7 | 58.6 |
| Three | 26.0 | 15.3 | 30.8 | 20.3 | 7.1 | 9.2 |
| Four or more | <u>53.2</u> | <u>75.8</u> | <u>3.8</u> | <u>34.5</u> | <u>--</u> | <u>3.5</u> |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Economic Research Service, Rural Life Survey, 1967.

Mobile home household heads were about as likely to have completed high school as were all household heads in the sample area (table 5), but they were somewhat more likely to have completed the eighth grade or have dropped out of high school and less likely to have completed 1 or more years of college. These relationships of the educational level of mobile home household heads to the educational level of all household heads in the sample area also apply in comparison with the national educational levels. However, the educational levels of both the mobile home heads and all household heads were lower for the open-country areas of the East North Central States than for the Nation (table 5). In comparison to the Census mobile home survey, mobile home heads in the sample area were over 2.6 times as likely to have completed no more than the eighth grade and only about one-fourth as likely to have completed some college.

In the sample area, the mobile home household heads under 45 years of age were nearly as well educated as the household heads in conventional housing (table 6). But the level of education in the study area was not as high as that for the Nation. Within each age group, household heads in the sample area had lower levels of education than did the same national group.

In all age groups, sample area mobile home heads were less likely than other heads to have gone beyond high school. Household heads aged 65 years or older had very seldom gone beyond the eighth grade. This lack of education held particularly true for the older heads of mobile home households.

Table 5.--Distribution of households in mobile homes and all homes by completed years of formal education of the household head, in the open country of the East North Central States and the United States, 1967

| Years of education | East North Central open country 1/ | | United States | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Mobile homes | All homes | Census mobile home study 2/ | All homes 3/ |
| | | | | |
| | Percent | | | |
| 8 or less | 35.9 | 41.3 | 13.6 | 29.1 |
| 9 to 11 | 25.2 | 18.8 | 32.0 | 18.4 |
| 12 | 34.4 | 30.3 | 36.2 | 30.1 |
| More than 12 | 4.6 | 9.6 | 18.2 | 22.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

1/, 3/ See footnotes 1/ and 3/, table 2. 2/ Derived from dropout rates for 1952-53 as computed from retention rates (Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education. Digest of Educational Statistics, 1966. Government Printing Office, 1966. p. 7.) as applied to the educational groups of footnote 2/, table 2.

Table 6.--Distribution of households in mobile homes and all homes by age and education of household head in the open country of the East North Central States and the United States, 1967

| Age and education of household head | East North Central open country 1/ | | United States 2/ |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Mobile homes | All homes | All homes |
| | ----- Percent ----- | | |
| Less than 45 years: | | | |
| 8 years or less | 16 | 17 | 3/15 |
| 9 to 11 years | 31 | 24 | 19 |
| 12 years | 45 | 48 | 37 |
| More than 12 years | 8 | 11 | 29 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 45 to 64 years: | | | |
| 8 years or less | 35 | 47 | 33 |
| 9 to 11 years | 27 | 19 | 19 |
| 12 years | 38 | 26 | 28 |
| More than 12 years | -- | 8 | 20 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 65 years or older: | | | |
| 8 years or less | 93 | 75 | 60 |
| 9 to 11 years | 7 | 9 | 13 |
| 12 years | -- | 7 | 14 |
| More than 12 years | -- | 9 | 12 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

1/ Economic Research Service. Rural Life Survey. 1967.

2/ U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 59 "Income in 1967 of Families in the United States." U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1969. pp. 42-43.

3/ Figures for all U.S. households are only for those with household heads aged 25 or older.

Net income for sample area mobile home households tended to fall below that of other area households (table 7). Nearly one-fifth of the mobile home households, but only one-seventh of the conventional home occupants, had incomes below \$2,000. Over the sample area, incomes tended to fall considerably below national figures.

A much larger percentage of sample area mobile home households than of census survey households had incomes below \$2,000. The lower income level of mobile home households is largely a result of the small number of household heads in the higher income ages, the age groups from 35 to 64. Nearly all sample area residents with less than \$2,000 income were 65 or older. It is, of course, expected that some of the households with older heads, while less likely to have readily employable members, may not have been as poor as their income indicated, since they were living off accumulated savings.

Two additional characteristics of mobile home household heads were noted in the study but are not presented in the tables. First, a mobile home household head was more likely than a conventional home household head to be male. Of the mobile homes in the sample area, 86.3 percent had male heads, while this is true of but 80 percent of all sample area households. Second, these mobile home households were unlikely to have significant landholdings. Three-fourths of the mobile home households owned less than 1 acre of land while only 5.4 percent owned more than 24 acres.

Table 7.--Distribution of households in mobile homes and all homes by household income in the open country of the East North Central States and United States, 1967

| Household income | : East North Central: | | United States | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------|------------|
| | : open country 1/ : | | | |
| | : Mobile | : All | : Census mobile | : All |
| | : homes | : homes | : home study 2/ | : homes 3/ |
| | Percent | | | |
| Less than \$2,000 | 19.1 | 13.4 | 3.3 | 14.4 |
| \$2,000 to \$3,999 | 13.0 | 16.2 | 13.1 | 14.5 |
| \$4,000 to \$4,999 | 14.6 | 7.4 | 11.2 | 6.7 |
| \$5,000 to \$5,999 | 11.5 | 9.5 | 14.5 | 7.6 |
| \$6,000 to \$6,999 | 9.9 | 10.2 | 12.7 | 7.7 |
| \$7,000 to \$7,999 | 11.5 | 9.7 | 12.9 | 7.8 |
| \$8,000 to \$9,999 | 8.4 | 14.1 | 16.5 | 13.0 |
| \$10,000 and over | 12.2 | 19.5 | 15.7 | 28.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

1/, 2/ See footnotes 1/ and 2/, table 2. 3/ U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 59. "Income in 1967 of Families in the United States." U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1969. pp. 42-43.